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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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March 28, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2353-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chairman Cole and Ranking Member Quigley:

I write to request Community Project Funding in Fiscal Year 2024 for a critical project to replace the HVAC system in the municipal recreation center located at 1 Drake Lane, South Toms River, New Jersey 08757. The intended recipient of these funds is the Borough of South Toms River.

The \$750,000 sought represents an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because this recreation center is a centerpiece of services, support and outreach offered to residents in the South Toms River community, which is federally designated as a low and moderate income (LMI) jurisdiction. To their credit, the borough has committed and pulled together \$150,000. The total cost of the project is \$900,000.

Without heat and air conditioning, the building will be rendered effectively useless to the many community events and programs it supports, and the current system is at the end of its useful life. The project has a federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized by title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 5305(a)(4)).

As William Gleason, the Chairman of the South Toms River Recreation Commission, notes in his letter of support, the recreation center hosts a variety of local organizations including the Commission's summer camp, the Homework Club tutoring program, periodic dances and events, multiple local cheerleading organizations, the local youth baseball teams, other sport groups, support groups, and regular public meetings and events. The center serves as a hub for this small, tight knit community.

Unfortunately, however, the Borough of South Toms River has not historically had access to many of the community resources that surrounding towns have. In addition to being designated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development as an LMI area, twelve percent of the population lives in poverty—significantly high compared to the State of New Jersey or Ocean County as a whole. The borough has also been identified by the State Department of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Agency as a municipality that “has long faced higher levels of air pollution, old and dangerous water infrastructure, and higher levels of contamination exposure than their neighbors.”

The project itself, as outlined by Van Cleef Engineering for the borough, calls for the replacement of four end-of-life air handling units located in the attic with four new DX cooling units for heating with remote air-cooled condensing units to be located on the roof. The project also includes replacement and modification of ductwork, the installation of a new DDC control system, and architectural and electrical work.

As laid out in the attached request letter from Council President Sandford Ross, the borough has worked in good faith to identify sources of funding for this critical project, having secured approximately \$150,000 from state and local sources, but needs significant investment from the federal government to complete the work and address this urgent need. The community project funding sought is essential to closing that gap and ensuring citizens of South Toms River can continue to utilize their recreation center.

Lastly, I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

I appreciate your time and consideration of this important request. Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or my Legislative Assistant, Christian Henniger, at 202-225-3765 or Christian.Henniger@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress